Seventy Seven Chieftaincies

Volume: 3

Published in: 1988

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Places Mentioned:

Link to original article in Kannada:
ಎಪ್ಪತ್ತೇಳು ಪಾಳೆಯಗಾರರು – Seventy Seven Chieftaincies

This article presents an extensive research on the importance and significance of numerals relating to number 7 as seen in various sources of history and folk fare of Karnataka and neighbouring region.

We come across a few numerals relating to number '7' mentioned in a number of literary and epigraphical sources. The folk literature contains much of these numerals. '7', is believed to be associated with mysticism as well as the studies like astrology, astronomy, theosophy, etc.

Historical works mention that, the Kakatiya king Prataparudra II (1289-1323 A.D.), the grandson and successor of Rudrama Devi(1262-1289 A.D.), took himself to the task of restoring the lost territories of the Kakatiyas. He reformed the system of administration by dividing his kingdom into 77 Nayakaships. His 77 Nayakas of the Padma Nayaka community had become celebrated during his reign and after his death Kapaya Nayaka, a political successor was served by 75 Nayakas. The later Vijayanagara Empire also followed the same form of administration and its three provinces,the Kannada, the Telugu and the Tamil areas were composed of 77 chieftaincies. Important of them being the Kannada provinces of Keladi, Santhebennur (Tarikere), Basavapatna, Chitradurga, Mysore, Holenarasipur and Periyapatna.

Occasionally we find in literature, the title 'Eppattelu Paleyagarara Minda', ಎಪ್ಪತ್ತೇಳು ಪಾಳೆಯಗಾರರ ಮಿಂಡ 'a paramour or 'a hero of 77 chiefs', which was a favourite title among the Nayakas of the 17th and 18th Centuries. The various chiefs, 77 in number, are not accurately listed in any records having authentic value. Therefore it is not easy to name all the 77 Nayakas since they differ according to different authorities and it is much less to state the extent of their power or territory.

Author has listed the available names of all the chieftaincies which were under the Vijayanagara Empire, HyderAli, Tippu and Mysore Wodeyar's administration. Author also has enumerated all the chieftaincies under Vijayanara Empire who took part in the famous Rakkasagi-Thangadagi war of 1556 AD.